

Department of Public Health
and Human Services

Section:
ISSUANCE

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

Subject:
Montana Access (EBT) Expungements

Supersedes: FAIM/FS 905-1 09/01/98

References: 7 CFR 274.12(g)

GENERAL RULE--Food stamp benefits are expunged when 365 days have passed from the last time the participant completed a food stamp transaction. Balance inquiries do not count as a financial transaction. Benefits are expunged on a "first in, first out" basis.

To avoid expungement, the participant must access their benefits by making a purchase for **any** amount. The 365 day time frame starts over with every financial transaction in the food stamp account.

Example: Coreen received food stamp benefits for June 2002. She spent some of her June benefits, but the last time she used her card was on June 20, 2002. Benefits were then issued for July and August 2002, but were never accessed.

If Coreen does not use her card to access food stamp benefits by June 20, 2003, her remaining June benefits will be expunged. At the end of July 2003, the July benefits would be expunged, and so on.

EXPUNGEMENT ALERTS

TEAMS alerts are generated monthly when participants have not assessed their EBT food stamp benefits for at least 30 days. The OPA Case Manager receives these alerts monthly, for as long as the case is open, as long as benefits are not accessed, or until benefits are expunged.

The OPA Case Manager must review the case to ensure the participant:

1. Is aware they have benefits remaining in their Montana Access EBT food stamp account; and,
2. Understands how to access their benefits with the Montana Access EBT card.

When benefits are expunged and the case is currently open, the OPA Case Manager receives an alert that states the benefits in the account were expunged. If the food stamp case is authorized for the next month's benefits, it is deauthorized. In that instance, TEAMS also creates the

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standard alert indicating the case was deauthorized. There will be no expungement alert when a case is closed.

**EXPUNGEMENT
NOTICES**

Notice F812 "FS Expungement Warning Letter" is automatically generated in TEAMS on the first working day of the month in which expungement criteria is met. The notice explains the Montana Access EBT food stamp account has not been accessed in 365 days and any amount of the available balance remaining in the account must be accessed by the 20th of the month. If benefits are not accessed, they will be expunged on the first working day of the next month.

**RECOUPMENT
OF EXPUNGED
BENEFITS**

Central Office receives a report of cases that received the expungement warning notice, and identifies if there are outstanding overpayment claims on TEAMS. If the participant does not access benefits by the deadline of the 20th, Central Office will apply the benefits towards the claims before they are expunged.

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